



MC-eGov Study on Multi-channel Delivery Strategies and Sustainable Business Models for Public Services addressing Socially Disadvantaged Groups

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Think Paper 2: Public Value and Multi-channel eService delivery

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	1
1.0 Introduction	3
2.0 What is Public Value?	6
3.0 Creating Public Value in eGovernment	11
4.0 Examples	16
4.1 The iSAC virtual intelligent service	16
4.2 The E17 initiative - The Danish digital library service for the blind,	18
5.0 Concluding remarks	20

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHO SHOULD READ THIS PAPER?

This paper is relevant for all the stakeholders (from policy to service delivery) involved in the delivery of services to socially excluded people. It will help to understand the diverse 'values' that arise when people are helped to overcome their exclusions. However, services for socially excluded people are generally different to conventional transactional eGovernment services, where monetary cost-benefits can often be identified. Social services instead generate less quantifiable benefits to society, for example by helping jobless people back into the workforce, or in helping homeless people back into an active role in society. The benefits, however, need to be clearly articulated, and the concept of Public Value is an important mechanism to achieve this.

WHAT ARE THE KEY LESSONS?

- To apply Public Value thinking, government has to rethink how it produces value to its citizens through its activities. Optimal and innovative utilization of resources is key in the creation of Public Value in society.
- Public Value generation in society is a strategic task. It involves three components; the stakeholders, the technology investments and government programs & operations. To achieve Public Value it is crucial to address technology capabilities among end-users, that stakeholders are equipped to support the utilization of the technologies and finally that government programmes accommodate the specific needs of all groups in society.
- To create Public Value policy makers should consider nature of services, their outcomes, and finally how public trust is created.
- Impact measures of eService initiatives include: financial, political, social, strategic, ideological and stewardship. The ideological and stewardship impact measures demonstrate the shift towards more qualitative measures where impacts on beliefs, moral and ethical commitment (ideological) and the public's view on government officials (stewardship) play a role along with more concrete measures such as the financial and political.

THIS IS NOT ABOUT CHANNELS, BUT ABOUT HOW SERVICES AND CHANNELS DELIVER VALUE FOR THE BENEFICIARIES

This Think Paper considers how multi-channel service provision can be an instrument for exit from social exclusion. The focus is not on the technical channels, or the intermediaries who can work with socially excluded people – these issues are assessed in other Think Papers. Here the issues are analyzed through the lens of Public Value, which has particular importance in assessing the impact of multi-channel service provision, because there often are not direct and substantial monetary cost-benefits.

The first generation of eGovernment services focused on revenue-generating services where financial cost benefits could be measured clearly. These services mainly focused on electronic channels i.e. the Internet and that made it more difficult for socially excluded people to access them. The recent strong policy emphasis on 'no-one left behind' in the information society has introduced an emphasis on directing services at socially excluded people introducing multi-channel eService delivery as a parameter for success. These services are often expensive to construct, and they do not generate revenue, but they generate benefits to the beneficiaries and to society.

Cost-benefit assessments applied in the context of multiple eGovernment channels tend to lead to conclusions of being more cost-effective than conventional silo channels. It is not, however, enough that the services are cost-effective if the services are to embrace socially excluded. Therefore concepts such as Public Value need to be introduced. Concepts which provide frameworks within which wider societal benefit can be measured. This benefits policy-makers by providing them with a robust mechanism for evaluating policy options when building services for socially excluded people.

Public Value is, in its most condensed form, defined as the value that government produces to citizens through its activities in society. Public Value generates indirect and long-term value to Society: "*there are two sources of Public Value: 1. Value that results from improving the government itself as an asset to society and 2. Value that results from the delivery of specific benefits directly to persons or groups*"¹.

Public Value focuses on how activities create added value to citizens through optimal and innovative utilization of resources. However, Public Value as a concept is something which goes beyond mere service provision it is also seen as an instrument for empowerment of citizens. Ultimately, Public Value has to create trust through improved service delivery leading to outcomes such as improvements in the general level of health in society, reduced poverty or increasing employment levels for socially excluded people - outcomes which are beneficial for all in society.

However, the literature describing Public Value demonstrates that it is often not clear how the Public Value is to be identified and measured and furthermore what the outcome ideally should be beyond the abstract term "value". These issues are explored in this Think Paper.

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_value

1.0 INTRODUCTION

“We have entered on a new stage of government, since the beginning of the present century in particular. Old services have been expanded, new ones have multiplied, governments are doing more and more for the individual and for the family. We need to know what these measures are producing, of good or of ill, in what measure they are benefiting or harming, strengthening or weakening, planting the seeds of vigour or of decay...”²

The above-cited statement was delivered in 1939 – almost seven decades ago. However, it appears to be more relevant than ever in the context of eGovernment and Multi Channel eService delivery, where not only has there been an expansion in the services offered by government to citizens, but also there are goals to ensure that services are provided to all citizens who need them, and to provide individual and personalized services³.

In the context of the goals of inclusive eGovernment, the simplest consideration could be to split citizens in two groups – those included, and those not included. However, the reality is that inclusion can be partial, and most people at some stage in their life will experience some form of exclusion. In terms of the service portfolios there are groups of citizens who engage actively with government services (such as online tax, obtaining licenses etc.) via digital channels and who are seen as included.⁴ The second group, those labeled not included, largely represents those who have for a variety of reasons do not, or cannot, engage with eServices. At present a general estimate is that about 20% of the European citizens are excluded from the promised benefits of eGovernment⁵, for example through reasons of social exclusion, learning and cognitive disabilities, or geographical isolation. This study addresses in particular those who are socially excluded.

² Public Services - What Value? Address delivered by Gwilym Gibbon at the Spring School, 1939, of the National Association of Local Government Officers, held at Exeter. Printed in Copyright 1939 Royal Institute of Public Administration Public Administration, volume 17, no. 4, 1939.

³ EUROPE. (2005c). *Information Society for all: Commission opens consultation to make ICT products and services more accessible*. (January 10) European Commission, [cited January 20 2005].

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/14&format=HTML&aged=0&language=en&guiLanguage=en>, EUROPE. (2005b). *Executive Summary - Ministerial eGovernment Conference 2005*. (December) European Commission, [cited December 20 2005].

http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/egovernment_research/doc/minconf2005/egovconf_executive_summary.doc, EUROPE. (2006a). *Internet for all: EU ministers commit to an inclusive and barrier-free information society*. (June 12) European Commission, [cited June 13 2006].

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/769&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>, EUROPE. (2006b). *Online public services are increasingly interactive: “intelligent delivery” is the next frontier, says latest e-Government report*. (June 29) European Commission, [cited July 4 2006].

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/875&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>, REDING, V. (2005b). *eGovernment in i2010 - citizens first*. (November 24) European Commission, [cited June 3 2006].

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/05/731&format=DOC&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>, REDING, V. (2005a). *Citizens first - the next wave of government services on-line*. (14 December) European Commission, [cited June 2 2006]. http://ec.europa.eu/comm/commission_barroso/reding/docs/speeches/paris_20051213.pdf

⁴ That is not synonymous with that the citizens belonging to the group actually use the services offered. Studies of utilization of eGovernment services indicate a low rate of utilization in the UK about 10% (cf. Ian Kearns, Public Value and E-Government, http://www.ippr.org.uk/uploadedFiles/projects/Kearns_PublicValueandGovernment_ippr.pdf) and less in Denmark (cf. Helle Zinner Henriksen. Fad or Investment in the Future -An Analysis of the Demand of e-Services in Danish Municipalities. *Electronic Journal of e-Government*, 4(2), pp. 19-26, 2006.

⁵ Inclusive eGovernment: survey of status and baseline activities.

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/egovernment/docs/i2010_studies/inclusive_egovernment_survey_12_07.pdf

Early in the history of eGovernment the problems of the second group have been addressed under the label of 'Digital Divide', articulated in EU policy through eInclusion⁶, eAccessibility⁷, and ensuring access to eServices by providing the necessary infrastructure⁸. In this multi-channel e-government (MC-eGov) study the perspective is one of developing Inclusive eGovernment: "*Inclusive eGovernment aims to ensure that every citizen benefits from the exploitation of ICTs in service delivery, regardless of whether or not they use online services.*"⁹ By moving away from a cost-benefit measure of impact of inclusive eGovernment, the benefits from the exploitation of ICT is rather seen through the lens of Public Value.

1.1 From Policy to Outcomes

The MC-eGov study focuses on Inclusive eGovernment from the perspective of socially-excluded end-users and their particular needs. This perspective has received high priority on the policy agenda not only in the EU but also in many of its member states where initiatives are launched specifically addressing how multiple channels can be utilized for the benefit of all. Multiple channels for eService provision should be used according to social and behavioral needs of citizens in order to provide means for a sustainable exit from social exclusion.

However, aside from moral and ethical issues about overcoming social exclusion, there are direct financial challenges; how to justify the investment in services; how to deliver them in the most effective way to beneficiaries through channels that are relevant to them for example SMS, chat, web-cam, RSS, Internet, phone, and intermediaries such as the third sector and public servants; and, how to measure the value of the outcomes.

The Public Value perspective is chosen so that the financial perspective of monetary cost-benefits (and the direct financial cost-benefits often would not justify the investment in service creation) is enriched by an understanding of the wider societal benefits in a way that can justify the service creation to policy-makers. Public Value looks at wider measures than just effective and efficient delivery of services and

⁶ EUROPE. (2007b). *Measuring progress in e-Inclusion Riga Dashboard 2007*. European Commission, [cited January 28 2008]. http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/einclusion/docs/i2010_initiative/rigadashboard.doc, EUROPE. (2007d). *Report on the Public Consultation on e-Inclusion strategy*. (November) European Commission, [cited January 28 2008]. http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/einclusion/docs/i2010_initiative/eIncl_consultation_report.doc, EUROPE. (2007a). *European i2010 initiative on e-Inclusion: "To be part of the information society"*. (COM(2007) 694 final, November 8) European Commission, [cited January 28 2008].

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/einclusion/docs/i2010_initiative/comm_native_com_2007_0694_f_en_acte.doc

⁷ EUROPE. (2005c). *Information Society for all: Commission opens consultation to make ICT products and services more accessible*. (January 10) European Commission, [cited January 20 2005]. <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/14&format=HTML&aged=0&language=en&guiLanguage=en>, EUROPE. (2005d). *Public on-line consultation on a proposed COMMISSION COMMUNICATION on eAccessibility*. (January 10) European Commission, [cited January 20 2005]. <http://europa.eu.int/yourvoice/forms/dispatch?form=369>, EUROPE. (2005e). *Spring 2005 EC Communication on eAccessibility*. (January 10) European Commission, [cited January 20 2005/1/10]. http://europa.eu.int/information_society/policy/accessibility/com_ea_2005/index_en.htm, EUROPE. (2005a). *eAccessibility*. (COM(2005) 425, September 13) European Commission, [cited November 1 2005]. http://europa.eu.int/information_society/policy/accessibility/com_ea_2005/a_documents/cec_com_eacc_2005.html

⁸ EUROPE. (2006a). *Internet for all: EU ministers commit to an inclusive and barrier-free information society*. (June 12) European Commission, [cited June 13 2006]. <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/769&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>, EUROPE. (2007c). *Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)16 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on measures to promote the public service value of the Internet*. (November 7) Council of Europe, [cited November 10 2007]. <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1207291&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogge d=FFAC75>

⁹ For a further discussion see the Inception Report of the MC-eGov study <http://www.mcegov.eu/project-study/outputs-and-deliverables.aspx>

the costs and benefits of public sector activities. The underlying discourse in Public Value is that prioritization of activities and services are based on preferences and needs of citizens rather than government, but with the understanding also that the citizens – through taxes – fund the services.

The remainder of the Think Paper is organized as follows. The next section provides an overview of how practitioners and academics have defined and discussed the concept of Public Value. This leads to a presentation of examples of Public Value in an eGovernment context and a more concrete operationalization of Public Value in an eService setting. The section presents a framework for analyzing Public Value with respect to concrete indicators leading to Public Value, a set of explicit impact parameters and finally outcome variables. The penultimate section presents some empirical examples which are analyzed through the lens of Public Value using the framework as a guide. Finally, the Paper ends with some concluding remarks.

2.0 WHAT IS PUBLIC VALUE?

Public Value is, in its most condensed form, defined as the value that government produces to citizens through its activities in society. The concept focuses on how activities create added value to citizens through optimal and innovative utilization of resources.¹⁰ The underlying assumption is that citizens delegate resources and power to government which then provide the necessary services and benefits in society, and *“The value added by government is the difference between the benefits that the public eventually enjoys and the resources and powers that citizens decide to give to their government.”*¹¹

The short answer to what Public Value is that it is: *“...the value created for citizens by government.”*¹² However, Public Value as a concept is something which goes beyond mere service provision it is also seen as an instrument for empowerment of citizens through the role of government in building democracy, protecting the environment, and maintaining a strong economy.¹³

The creation of Public Value is mainly placed on the public sector which has the responsibility to create the opportunities for improved service provision and empowerment. Public Value is therefore considered to be:

*“...a means for transformation of governments leading to fast response, simplification, quality, and efficiency for meeting the needs of citizens and companies in the knowledge society, resulting in taking the necessary action to adapt services, processes and (re-) organisation.”*¹⁴

Public Value can be seen as a management philosophy in government. Writings on the topic suggest that Public Value refers to the value that citizens and their representatives seek in relation to outcomes of public services. Moore¹⁵ states that it is very much what we as citizens expect government to carry out once we have elected them. This is very much a pull-perspective on Public Value. From a push-perspective Public Value is described as *“... the value created by government through services, laws regulation and other actions.”*¹⁶

¹⁰ Moore M.. *Creating Public Value Strategic Management in Government*. Harvard University Press, 1995.

¹¹ World Public Sector Report 2003: E-Government at the Crossroads. United Nations

<http://www.unpan.org/Library/SearchDocuments/tabid/70/ctl/DocumentDetails/mid/985/did/14100/Default.aspx>

¹² Ian Kearns, Public Value and E-Government

http://www.ippr.org.uk/uploadedFiles/projects/Kearns_PublicValueandE-Government_ippr.pdf

¹³ eGovernment in the EU in the next decade: The vision and key challenges. Based on the workshop held in Seville, 4-5 March 2004:

“eGovernment in the EU in 2010: Key policy and research challenges”

<http://ftp.jrc.es/EURdoc/21376-ExeSumm.pdf>

¹⁴ eGovernment beyond 2005: “CoBrA Recommendations” to the eEurope Advisory Group eGovernment Beyond 2005 - Modern and Innovative Public Administrations in the 2010 horizon <http://europa.eu.int/idabc/servlets/Doc?id=18465>

¹⁵ The term was first presented in the book “Creating Public Value – Strategic Management in Government” by Mark H. Moore in 1995.

Since then it has achieved good foothold in the literature as an alternative to the New Public Management approach.

¹⁶ Gavin Kelly, Geoff Mulgan & Stephen Muers. *Creating Public Value - An analytical framework for public service reform*

http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/seminars/-/media/assets/www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/public_value2%20pdf.ashx

Clearly there has to be both the pull (the demand from citizens) and the push (the supply from public institutions) in societies, which are based redistribution of resources to its citizens. However, the Public Value thinking goes further than that. It assumes that the public sector has a responsibility for creating Public Value which then is recognized by citizens.

The underlying assumption is that public service is not static and resources embedded in public institutions can be utilized in alternative ways. The core idea is that it is managers' responsibility to explore new ways of using resources available in a given setting and to adapt to changes in demand and user needs. The Public Value concept represents a deviation from the New Public Management paradigm in the sense that it focuses on what can be produced and delivered within government rather than focusing on what can be privatized and outsourced to the market¹⁷. Oakley and colleagues stress the Public Value concept by saying: "... *in other words how the working practices of public servants might contribute to particular sorts of benefits found only in public services.*"

The Public Value thinking signals a shift towards a 'post-competitive' paradigm where the focus is on the achievement of a broader governmental goal of Public Value creation rather than focusing on results and efficiency based on market logic which characterizes the NPM paradigm.¹⁸ It marks a shift towards including more soft parameters when determining the value of services and it places the responsibility for utilizing public resources in an ultimate manner by managers in public institutions.

Moore provides an illustrative example of how a manager of a public library was forced to rethink the role of the library due to new demands. The library experienced increased pressure on its facilities from youngsters who used the reading room in the afternoon. It turned out that there were no offers for the youngsters after school hours and they started to use the library as a shelter in the afternoon. The manager could have chosen to turn the youngsters away with the argument that a reading room is not a place for noisy youngsters and that it is not the task of a library to serve as a youth club. Alternatively, the manager decided to rethink how the new demand for the building could be accommodated implementing new activities which suited the youngsters better. She therefore allocated space, staff and activities which suited the needs of the youngsters.

This action created Public Value at several levels e.g. keeping the youngsters from the streets thereby preventing running-down of public facilities or perhaps vandalism in the public space, providing a culturally stimulating alternative to the streets, providing proper indoor space thereby addressing the general health of the youngsters compared to having them hanging out in the streets or in shelters of poor quality.

The example illustrates how the public manager creates Public Value by utilizing the resources (buildings and staff) of the library in an alternative manner.¹⁹ The example is illustrative of Public Value creation and also an example of the expectations of capabilities of innovative thinking the paradigm

¹⁷ Kate Oakley, Richard Naylor & David Lee: Giving them what they want: the construction of the public in 'Public Value'. http://www.bop.co.uk/pdfs/060921_BOP_Public_Value_and_Broadcasting_Paper.pdf

¹⁸ Janine O'Flynn provides a comparative analysis of the differences between New Public Management and Public Value in her article "From New Public Management to Public Value: Paradigmatic Change and Managerial Implications" (*The Australian Journal of Public Administration*, volume 66, no. 3, pp. 353-366, 2007).

¹⁹ Apart from a shift in thinking the Public Value also invites for an increased discretion of the manager with respect to optimal utilization of resources available. It includes elements of the "street-level-bureaucracy" introduced by Lipsky two decades ago.

places on the public manager. Aldridge and Stoker²⁰ list the rather strong demands the Public Value thinking puts on the public sector and its managers:

- *A performance culture. A strong commitment to service for individuals and the community reflected in world-class service delivery and reinforced by training, support, and systems to ensure a sustainable service culture and continuous improvement.*
- *A commitment to accountability. An emphasis on open access to information for individuals and groups of interested citizens with strong public accountability to the electorate at large.*
- *A capacity to support universal access. Recognition of a special responsibility to support the rights of all service users in an environment where their choice of service is restricted.*
- *Responsible employment practices. Well-trained, well-managed, and well-motivated staff members who act professionally and are fairly rewarded.*
- *Contribution to community well-being. A recognition of the need to work in partnership with others across the public, private, and voluntary sectors to contribute to the promotion of community well-being and to meet the needs of individuals.*

To create Public Value is however not always as straightforward as demonstrated in the library example. The library example fits nicely with the five above-listed characteristics. Furthermore, it was obvious that a dose of innovative thinking and changes in priorities made a visible difference for the new group of end-users. Moore provides another example where the solution is less obvious: Garbage collection. Even if the five characteristics are fulfilled it can be asked: How can Public Value be achieved in that type of service from government? Garbage collection requires a robust and costly infrastructure: garbage cans, dustcarts, garbage collectors, refuse disposal plants etc. but is it possible to get more and other value for money? There is no doubt that it is valuable to keep the environment clean but it takes much effort to provide an example of how innovative managerial behavior can create Public Value. Garbage collection is a very illustrative example of a service which government chooses to provide due to esthetic and health concerns but which has a small margin for innovative behavior because the service level is taken for granted or highly specialized not leaving much room for alternative utilization of resources.

One strong criticism of the Public Value thinking which is ignored or scaled down in the above-mentioned sources is the democratic deficit internally in government.²¹ No distinction is made between elected and appointed administrators. Wilson who is often considered to be father of the idea of a division between politics and administration stated it explicitly:

*“Administration lies outside the proper sphere of politics. Administrative questions are not political questions. Although politics sets the tasks for administration, it should not be suffered to manipulate its offices.”*²²

The point is that the room for exercising Public Value is limited by overall policy goals defined by politicians. Elected officials will only to the degree of what is opportune work for Public Value. One assumption could be that it is less attractive to work for Public Value for socially excluded because

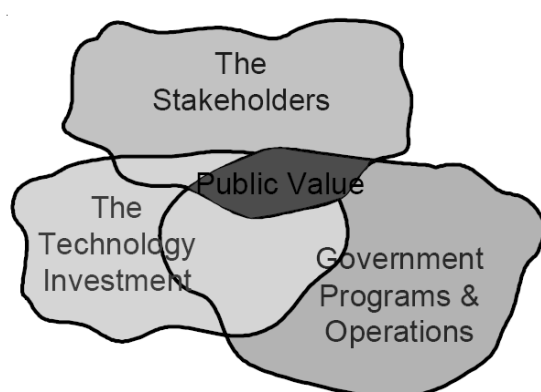
²⁰ Aldridge & Stoker (2002). *Advancing a public service ethos*. London: New Local Government Network.

²¹ Rhodes & Wanna (2007) *The Limits to Public Value, or Rescuing Responsible Government from the Platonic Guardians*. *The Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 66 (4).

²² Woodrow Wilson (1887). *The study of administration*. *Political Science Quarterly*, 2 (June).

there are not many votes in securing their welfare. In a culture where employed administrative staff is more the rule than the exception the Public Value may also be challenged. The administrative staff will only to a certain degree be able to reallocate resources or redefine which tasks should be covered by the resources allocated in the budgets. So even though the idea of Public Value sounds captivating it might be difficult to carry out in practice.²³ In order to reach a meaningful understanding of Public Value it is therefore crucial to include the policy level because at the end of the day the policy level defines the demarcation line for what is possible and what is not in the creation of Public Value. In the particular context of eServices it is furthermore of core importance to include technology. Figure 1, below, depicts the three components which have been suggested to constitute Public Value.

Figure 1: Basic Elements in a Public Value Framework²⁴



Given its importance a closer look is taken at the technology dimension. The technology dimension focuses on multiple channels which in the MC-eGov context mainly are technology driven.

2.1 Multiple Channels

If Public Value is to be reaped from technology investments public sector has to rethink its eService provision if it is to establish a sustainable exit from social exclusion via multi channel eService provision mediation. The multiple channels which are available at present do (compared to the era where the internet was the dominating alternative to physical access to governmental services) represent channels which are targeted to the less elitist part of the population. That is the case with mobile phones and TV. As recently rightfully stated in a Danish newsletter “finally the technology laggards get an opportunity to be part of the digital society”.²⁵ The statement was made as a commentary to the Danish governments’ initiative on developing the second generation of digital signatures so that it can be used for mobile phones too. One issue is that socially excluded and or disadvantaged in most cases have mobile phones thereby having access to the potential services provided via that channel but more

²³ At this point it should be stressed that the two examples (the library and the garbage collection) provided by Moore are fictitious. He stresses that the examples are created in order to illustrate how the ideal Public Value scenario should look.

²⁴ Source: Anthony M. Cresswell, G. Brian Burke and Theresa A. Pardo. Advancing Return on Investment Analysis for Government IT: A Public Value Framework. http://www.ctg.albany.edu/publications/reports/advancing_roi

²⁵ Ingeniøren [The Engineer – the newsletter of the members of the Engineers Union in Denmark] June 13th, 2008

importantly many of the people belonging to that group use the functionalities of the mobile phones as part of their daily living.²⁶

That does however not necessarily imply that a robust channel for government-citizen interaction is established. One issue is that not all services can be transferred via all channels. Another issue is that not all citizens are capable of handling the necessary channels and its content. To communicate with government requires in many cases that you have to be “government literate” on top of being “technology literate”.

These two requirements in combination means that it is necessary to be able to understand the language and logic of public administration and to respond in a correct and often pre-defined manner dictated by technological capabilities of the eServices.

There is a growing approval of the third sector as an active player in society. Following this assumption mediators from third sector agencies represent a way to overcome the obstacles for socially excluded groups with respect to the two types of illiteracy.²⁷

The next section focuses on the incentives for suppliers of eServices (public sector institutions) and the consumers of the public services (the citizens) with respect to the perceived value of eService provision.

²⁶ The MC-eGov study has applied the classification of socially excluded provided by FOLEY, P., KATHY, ALFONSO, X., FISHER, J. & BRADBROOK, G. (2005). *e-Government: reaching socially excluded groups?* (September) Improvement and Development Agency, [cited June 1 2006]. <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=1074872>

- Unemployment and worklessness: Low skills, Literacy/language skills, Long term illness/disability, Ethnic penalty/discrimination, Social capital.
- Early years disadvantage; Child poverty, Lack of social capital, Access to benefits. Families or individuals with complex and multiple needs; Information sharing, Access to services, Intermediaries.
- Educational underachievement; Low parental expectation/involvement, Deprived neighbourhoods, Access to home computer.
- Homelessness; Social isolation; Frequent moving.
- Health inequalities; Mental health stigma, Disability and independent living, Access to services.

²⁷ It should be stressed that technology literacy should not be taken for granted among civil servants and third sector mediators. As mentioned by an informant in our initial field studies of the MC-eGov study there is a need for upgrading technology skills among social workers in order to make them capable of supporting clients. See the presentation at <http://www.mcegov.eu/news-events.aspx>, Session 3a “Homelessness in Denmark”.

3.0 CREATING PUBLIC VALUE IN EGOVERNMENT

The overview presented in Section 3 and also the library example broadly ignores technology as an explicit component in value creation. Taking into consideration the significance of eGovernment in the public discourse and furthermore that technology constitutes one of the core assets in public sector today it is worthwhile to consider how technology contributes to the creation of Public Value. Furthermore, in the context of multi channel eService delivery technology/ eGovernment represents the core alternative to the traditional delivery of public services.

Gartner Group has among others²⁸ provided measures for the Public Value of IT. They discuss how IT-related changes and investments contribute over time to improved constituent service level, operational efficiency and political return:

- *Constituent service level – Constituent service level measures the impact on time and cost of users or beneficiaries of government services, in terms of accessibility, quality, and convenience of services.*
- *Operational efficiency – Operational efficiency measures the internal impact of an initiative – both on individual departments and across government organizations.*
- *Political return – Political return measures the impact of investments on political goals and consensus, the overall impact on society in terms of wider reach of information, alleviation of digital and cultural divides, etc., and impact on the economy (reduced unemployment, growth in exports, growth of small and medium-sized businesses, etc.).*

The three aspects of IT-driven improvement in relation to Public Value show that it is expected not only to provide benefits and values for the citizens in the form of improved accessibility, quality and convenience. The benefits are further gained internally in government by optimizing work processes but also as political return by strengthening the overall economy of the nations. The theme of operational efficiency is explicitly mentioned in sources from the domain of eGovernment:

“Public Value should be a key consideration when prioritising eGovernment services. The exchange of good practices in delivering Public Value is essential in order to better understand the most effective mechanisms to deliver – and measure - Public Value.”²⁹

Kearns³⁰ suggests that the benefits linking Public Value and e-government is dual. Firstly, he believes that the use of ICT leads to more effective delivery of services. Secondly, he emphasizes that the more holistic thinking of e-government will lead to a more effective process of evaluation of the benefits of improved ICT use. Kearns thus suggests that ICT in itself is an instrument to create Public Value but furthermore that it is a tool to monitor the internal practices of public administration.

²⁸ For an overview of frameworks for measuring Public Value of IT see: World Bank 2007, the Public Value of IT frameworks <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTINFORMATIONANDCOMMUNICATIONANDTECHNOLOGIES/Resources/282822-1188575147431/PublicValueITFrameworks2007.pdf>

²⁹ eGovernment beyond 2005: “CoBrA Recommendations” to the eEurope Advisory Group eGovernment Beyond 2005 - Modern and Innovative Public Administrations in the 2010 horizon (emphasis as in original text) <http://europa.eu.int/idabc/servlets/Doc?id=18465>

³⁰ Ian Kearns, Public Value and E-Government http://www.ippr.org.uk/uploadedFiles/projects/Kearns_PublicValueandE-Government_ippr.pdf

Kearns is not alone in expressing great expectations to ICT as a means for governments meeting the needs of the citizens:

“ ... inter-relationships among the people, government and Public Value – if applied to analysis of e-government - is simple and straightforward. People express preferences, the government uses ICT to enhance its own capacity to deliver what people want, and eventually a Public Value - the outcome of a high quality of life - is created.”³¹

The above-mentioned UN-statement suggests that Public Value in the context of eGovernment is straightforward. That might be a truth with modifications when it comes to the domain of Inclusive eGovernment and eService provision to socially disadvantaged citizens. Even though socially disadvantaged citizens represent individuals which receives more support from government than the average citizen the citizen is also typically characterized by having less resources and capabilities to express her preferences. Another aspect which cannot be ignored is the fact that delivery of public services is not a smorgasbord which allows any wish to be fulfilled. Governments have limited resources and redistribution of resources is a choice.³²

The Public Value thinking represents an alternative to the traditional thinking of redistribution of resources but it is still guided by some parameters which are more concrete than “the expressed preferences of people”. It has been suggested that there are three building blocks of Public Value creation:^{33 34}

The examples of outcomes of the three building blocks indicate that the Public Values are situated on a continuous scale ranging from concrete parameters directly related to improvement in physical living-conditions (increased choice and satisfaction) to less tangible benefits ultimately leading to empowerment (fairness of provision). However, one striking commonality of the published materials on Public Value is that authors are very hesitant to outline concrete examples of how Public Value materializes for the citizen.

³¹ World Public Sector Report 2003: E-Government at the Crossroads. United Nations

<http://www.unpan.org/Library/SearchDocuments/tabid/70/ctl/DocumentDetails/mid/985/did/14100/Default.aspx>

³² Cf. The abovementioned reference in Section 3 to the division between politics and administration.

³³ Gavin Kelly, Geoff Mulgan & Stephen Muers. Creating Public Value - An analytical framework for public service reform
http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/seminars/~media/assets/www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/public_value2%20pdf.ashx

³⁴ Janine O'Flynn – for the full reference see Footnote 21.

Table 1: Parameters determining Public Value creation

Building block	Characteristic of building block	Examples of Public Value creation in eGovernment ³⁵
Services	Services provide the vehicle for delivering Public Value through actual service encounters for users or clients and the distribution of fairness, equity, and associated values for citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability • Increased choice of service delivery • Satisfaction of users • Perceived importance of service • Fairness of provision • Cost
Outcomes	Outcomes largely overlap with services but have to be considered separately because they encompass much higher order aspirations such as national security, poverty reduction, or public health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in health • Reduced poverty • Environmental improvements
Trust	Trust, legitimacy and confidence in government are critical to Public Value creation because failure in trust effectively destroy Public Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance of government action • Feeling sense of association with government

In an analysis of the Public Value of Russian regional eGovernment the three parameters are supported by five indicators ³⁶:

- Openness indicator - characterizes promotion in public eservices development and indicates levels of e-openness of executive public agencies.
- Transparency indicator - transparency of structure, transparency of activity and feedback transparency.
- Interactivity indicator - characterizes the willingness, readiness and capability of the organization to meet individual user demand. It also estimates created feedback opportunities.
- Citizen-centricity indicator - specifies the levels of citizen-centric approach implementation into organizing of information and services provided through the portal.
- Usability indicator - characterizes the quality of access to the portal and its effectiveness as a tool for working with information.

³⁵ Ian Kearns, Public Value and E-Government

http://www.ippr.org.uk/uploadedFiles/projects/Kearns_PublicValueandEgovernment_ippr.pdf

³⁶ Anastasia A. Golubeva. Evaluation of Regional Government Portals on the Basis of Public Value Concept: Case Study from Russian Federation. In proceedings of

The indicators serve as good pointers of where to look for the creation of Public Value. They do however not say much about what the Public Value is of specific initiatives beyond the three parameters services, outcomes and trust. Cresswell and colleagues³⁷ are more specific on defining potential impacts of initiatives aimed at creating Public Value. Their article:

“...presents a new and more comprehensive way of describing Public Value, based on six kinds of impacts government IT can have on the interests of public stakeholders.”

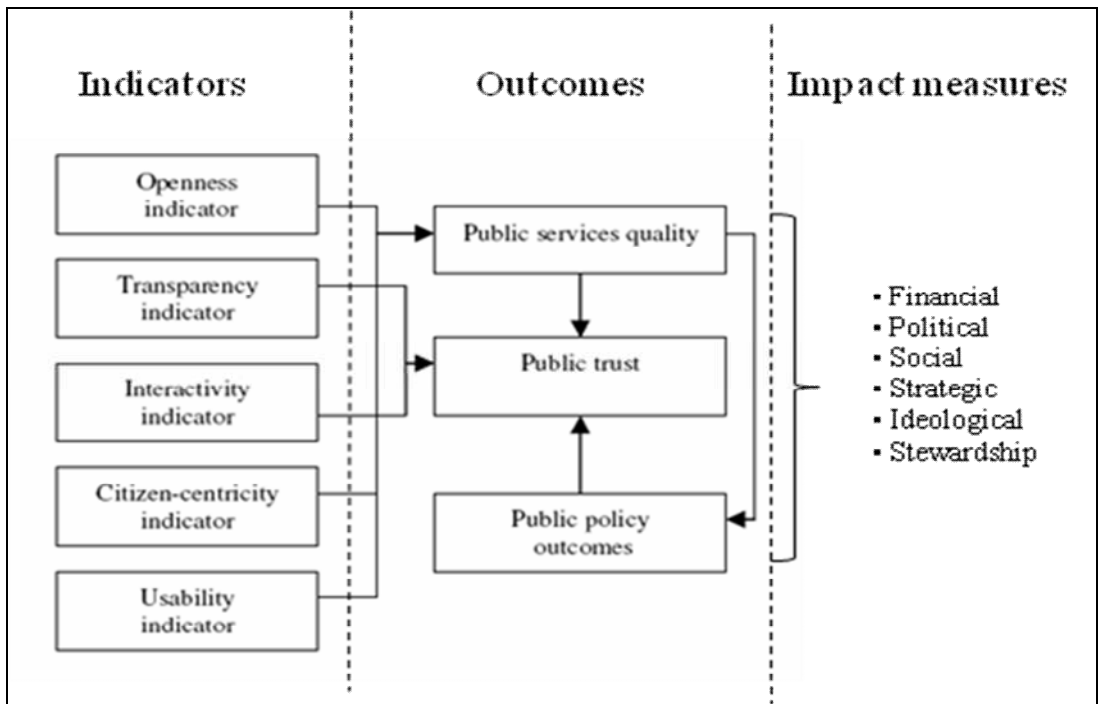
The six kinds of impacts are as the following:

- *Financial – impacts on current or anticipated income, asset values, liabilities, entitlements, and other aspects of wealth or risks.*
- *Political – impacts on personal or corporate influence on government actions or policy, role in political affairs, or influence in political parties or prospects for current or future public office.*
- *Social – impacts on family or community relationships, social mobility, status, and identity.*
- *Strategic – impacts on economic or political advantage or opportunities, goals, resources for innovation or planning.*
- *Ideological – impacts on beliefs, moral or ethical commitments, alignment of government actions or policies or social outcomes with beliefs, or moral or ethical positions.*
- *Stewardship – impacts on the public’s view of government officials as faithful stewards or guardians of the value of the government itself in terms of public trust, integrity, and legitimacy.*

Though the five indicators along with the six types of impacts were not specifically developed to analyze multi-channel eService delivery to socially excluded the parameters serve as a useful tool for strengthening our understanding of what constitutes the three core elements of Public Value: service, trust and outcome.

³⁷ Anthony M. Cresswell, G. Brian Burke and Theresa A. Pardo. Advancing Return on Investment Analysis for Government IT: A Public Value Framework. http://www.ctg.albany.edu/publications/reports/advancing_roi

Figure 2: Indicators for identifying Public Value³⁸ and impact measures³⁹ for assessing Public Value of multi-channel eService delivery for socially excluded



³⁸ Source: Anastasia A. Golubeva. Evaluation of Regional Government Portals on the Basis of Public Value Concept: Case Study from Russian Federation. In proceedings of

³⁹ Anthony M. Cresswell, G. Brian Burke and Theresa A. Pardo. Advancing Return on Investment Analysis for Government IT: A Public Value Framework. http://www.ctg.albany.edu/publications/reports/advancing_roi

4.0 EXAMPLES

This section presents two initiatives which have been implemented in Europe in order to meet a more holistic provision of services to citizens. The examples have been chosen because they report on concrete initiatives where social inclusion has been addressed by introducing alternative channels of interaction. One of the examples is part of the MC-eGov study and has been subject of a more thorough analysis reported on the MC-eGov web-site.⁴⁰ For the purpose of this Think Paper the presentation of the examples has been retrieved and copied from the ePractice.eu portal. The examples have been indexed as eInclusion initiatives and are therefore supposed to address aspects of social exclusion. The cases are analysed through the lens of Public Value in particular discussing the aspects related to indicators, impact measures, and outcomes presented in Figure 2. The aim is to demonstrate that it is possible to identify aspects of Public Value based on the parameters presented in Figure 2 thereby making it a useful instrument for policy makers to determine the potential of a given initiative in relation to producing Public Value.

The Catalanian iSAC initiative represents a general eService initiative which creates a new channel for access of municipal services and does as such address all citizens equally. The Danish E17 project does on the other hand address a specific group of potentially socially excluded namely people with reading disabilities.

4.1 *The iSAC virtual intelligent service*⁴¹

iSAC is a virtual intelligent service, based upon the same philosophy of existing face-to-face & telephone conventional citizen attention services. However, these are many times overloaded and they risk to fail meeting the needs of citizens. Replicating and improving these services is expensive and complex, but with the use of ICT and AI the Spanish Municipality of Terrassa has extended the service to serve more people, 24 hours a day, using different channels to satisfy queries for work, private and social life. The iSACs is an OSS tool; it understands queries in the natural language of citizens, with no administrative jargon, and uses local specific semantics to give clear precise answers. iSAC retrieves information from existing information DB with a zero maintenance cost. It is multilingual and multimodal, with learning semi-automated abilities.

⁴⁰ See <http://www.mcegov.eu/case-studies.aspx>: "iSAC - multichannel inclusive eGovernment using Natural Language Processing."

⁴¹ <http://www.epractice.eu/cases/2647>

Table 2: Analysis of the iSAC initiative

Indicators	Impact	Outcomes
<p>✓ openness is one of the core drivers of the iSAC project where the objective is to provide extended service by providing services via multiple channels</p> <p>✓ transparency is addressed in the sense that there is transparency of structure and there is created better accessibility to services</p> <p>✓✓ the ultimate strength of the iSAC project is that interactivity is addressed based on the capabilities of the end-users not the developers</p> <p>✓✓ citizen-centricity is met by making interaction with the portal based on natural language</p> <p>✓ based on the written documentation the usability appears to be high</p>	<p>Social For the end-user the social impact of the iSAC initiative leads to a strengthened self-esteem among citizens which have better opportunities of communicating with local government</p> <p>Ideological The iSAC initiative demonstrates that there is will from government to meet citizens based on capabilities of citizens</p> <p>Stewardship By offering an extended service based on the premises of citizens there is an increased likelihood that government can legitimize its actions</p>	<p>Services The same services are offered but in a different format thereby securing access to more people. Access is not solely dependent on computer literacy and access to computers – though it is seen as the preferred channel from government.</p> <p>Outcomes Social exclusion due to limited government literacy is overcome due to the choice between on-line and off-line channels.</p> <p>Trust <i>It is too early to determine if trust has been strengthened in the Catalan local government. Conclusions have to be based on empirical evidence.</i></p>

By applying the components from Figure 2 related to indicators, impacts and outcomes it appears that the iSAC initiative fulfills all the indicators for producing Public Value. Based on an interpretation of the materials available on-line it furthermore appears that a number of impacts have been achieved in the project.

Concerning the outputs the project excels in the sense that the same services are offered but through innovative thinking in government the services have been accessible to more people. The particular Public Value is that the services are offered in a format which is understandable for groups potentially at risk in society. From interpreting the case it does however appear that even though the government literacy has been eliminated it is still an expectation from government that users possess an understanding of the internet. Returning to the two afore-mentioned sources of Public Value: 1. *Value that results from improving the government itself as an asset to society* and 2. *Value that results from the delivery of specific benefits directly to persons or groups.*⁴² The iSAC initiative demonstrates that it is possible to create both. The Catalan government has improved itself by providing more transparency and at the same time by increasing the possibility for citizens to get access to services via multiple channels.

⁴² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_value

4.2 The E17 initiative - The Danish digital library service for the blind⁴³, ⁴⁴

The Danish National Library for The Blind (DBB) provides a digital library service for the visually impaired and dyslexic in the form of eBooks, digital talking books (DTB) and Braille materials. The process from when library users order material via the E17 Internet portal (www.e17.dk) to the production of the media (CD or Braille paper - eBooks are downloaded instantly) is fully automated and the material arrives at the designated address within a day or two. This 24/7 service allows for the speedy delivery of library material that enables users equal access to information and, hence, social inclusion.

⁴³ <http://www.epractice.eu/cases/1049>. The library has as potential clients a large part of the Danish population. It is estimated that about 50.000 Danes are blind or visually impaired, 2-3% of the population are dyslexic and about 500.000 are deaf or hearing-impaired leading to reading difficulties.

⁴⁴ The library offers services to other groups than the blind. The library has as potential clients a large part of the Danish population. It is estimated that about 50.000 Danes are blind or visually impaired, 2-3% (approximately 100,000 to 150,000 people) of the population are dyslexic and about 500.000 are deaf or hearing-impaired leading to reading difficulties.

Table 3: Analysis of the E17 Internet portal

Indicators	Impact	Outcomes
<p>✓ openness - the E17 represents a high degree of e-openness The E17 does not really invite for transparency in the traditional way given that it is a service offer which is not strictly necessary in order to navigate in society. The E17 is “nice to have” not “need to have”.</p> <p>✓ the E17 is based on a high level of interactivity meeting individual user demands broadening the scope of groups which can benefit from the service. Apart from visually impaired the site invites all with types of reading disabilities problems to use the service.</p> <p>✓ Citizen-centricity is met by organizing information so that it meets the special needs of clients. All types of audio-visual media are offered.</p> <p>✓ Usability is high given that the user is familiar with the internet.</p>	<p>Social E17 has mainly impact in the form that a large group of citizens get access to written material which they have been excluded from.</p> <p>Strategic An initiative such as E17 can mobilize resources in society. I.e. that citizens excluded from written materials get new opportunities for participating in social life and labour market.</p>	<p>Services New services are offered to more groups at risk in society. Access is dependent on computer literacy and access to computers in general.</p> <p>Outcomes Social exclusion due to limited reading capabilities is overcome if computer literacy is overcome and access is provided to groups at risk.</p> <p>Trust Citizens with reading disabilities are given a feeling of association with society</p>

The E17 is an example of eInclusion where a group with particular disabilities is addressed and supported. The E17 initiative represents a service which serves as a means for empowering groups which are usually left out in society and as such the initiative is capable of creating trust which is the ultimate goal in the creation of Public Value. The example demonstrates eminently how multiple channels are utilized to deliver services though it is still a prerequisite that the user or her mediator is capable of operating the internet which is the only entry point to the service.

One issue which makes it hard to determine if the E17 initiative strictly speaking has generated Public Value is that it is a “qualitative service”. The E17 service is dependent on the level the Danish society can afford. Resources are allocated to make the service available rather than shifting resources in an innovative manner – such as the library example where a new service was produced based on the resources already available.

5.0 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The study of Public Value has demonstrated that it is a widely used concept, and that Public Value is desirable. However, at present the number of empirical studies where Public Value is identified and evaluated do not extend to a consideration of Public Value of multi channel eService delivery specifically targeted towards socially excluded.

However, the Public Value perspective is relevant because by looking at multi channel eService delivery through the lens of Public Value a more balanced and integrated view on eService provision is applied. This more social view of value is important because more rational cost-benefit approaches fall short when looking at socially excluded – services to these people seldom are cost-efficient in a monetary sense. The socially excluded represent a group which on one hand have less resources and skills but on the other hand need more support in order to be self-sustainable. Generally, there are great expectations towards technology supported channels which at a low cost can provide services to these citizens.

At present there are multiple technology supported channels which governments can utilize – and have utilized - in their provision of services. However, most of the channels require substantial IT-literacy. The Internet has so far not proven to be a widely-used alternative to face-to-face meetings for the groups at risk in society, although it is clear that intermediaries such as Third Sector organizations work hard to mediate the ICT channels to socially excluded people. The Internet represents a channel which requires a high degree of IT-literacy combined with relatively high end-user investments in hardware and software and also a substantial running cost of connection to communication networks. However, mobile phones are being seen as a mechanism for providing services to citizens via a lower-cost medium which citizens are confident with and which holds all the necessary functionalities for interaction and service provision.

Two empirical examples have been visited in order to examine if and how Public Value is attainable. The two examples are Internet-based solutions. The iSAC project demonstrates eminently that it is possible to overcome the obstacles of government-illiteracy by creating channels of communication which are based on the citizens' preferences and understanding based on a move away from rigid public sector language to natural language. That represents a strong Public Value because it has been possible to create better conditions to citizens through innovative behavior in government by using already available tools in new ways. The major hindrance to full benefit of the generated Public Value is that citizens have to master the Internet in order to derive the full benefit of the portal. The E17 example demonstrates that it is possible to create value for users. However, it can be questioned if the E17 represents a true Public Value example. The E17 is produced based on its own budget and does therefore not resemble the famous Moore-example where resources are utilized in an alternative and innovative manner thereby creating Public Value based on existing assets of government.

As illustrated in Figure 1, Public Value is situated in the intersection between technology investments, stakeholders, and government programs and operations. One of the future challenges with respect to making sure that socially excluded also benefits from Public Value in eService provision is to make sure that technology investors consider their technology capabilities that stakeholders are sufficiently equipped to support them, and that government programs and operations accommodate the specific needs of socially excluded people.